

28 March 1966

Dear Miss McAlinden:

It was good to get such a readily identifiable specimen. It is definitely Chenopodium californicum (Wats.) Wats. of the Goosefoot Family, Chenopodiaceae. It is very common in many plant communities in much of cis-montane California. Your correspondent is quite observant for the Chenopodium belongs to the same family as the Spinach, Spinacia oleracea L. I have no information that this species of Chenopodium is poisonous but a relative, C. ambrosioides L., Wormseed or Mexican-tea, does contain an anthelmintic oil of chenopodium used as a vermifuge. Overdoses of the oil have resulted in cases of poisoning, according to reports. Thus I would suggest some care in any culinary experiments--even though this species is probably quite harmless and possibly even palatable.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Thorne